

Cuba Solidly Backs Castro, Author Says

Author Harvey O'Connor of Little Compton said last night that most Cubans are solidly behind Fidel Castro.

"The idea that the people there were ready to rise against him is one of the most fantastic ideas I've ever heard," he declared.

Mr. O'Connor spent 10 days in Cuba two months ago. He visited the country as part of a world survey of the petroleum industry, the subject of a book he is now writing.

author said he talked to many Cubans during his visit. "The firstes I was given was that a percentage of the population for Castro was 70 to 80 percent," he said. "There certainly is a greater percentage of Cubans than was behind Castro in the last election."

O'Connor criticized the U.S. government for what he called its "iron curtain" of refusing to permit Americans to visit Cuba. If Americans had been permitted to visit the country, he said, U.S. leaders might not have been forced to depend on reports from the Central Intelligence Agency that Cuba was ready to attack the U.S.

"I think you can find any-

thing that you're looking for," Mr. O'Connor said. "Apparently the CIA was looking for information that Cuba was ripe for revolt."

Although business kept him busy during most of his stay in Cuba, he said, he saw much evidence of improvements under Castro. There are tens of thousands of new homes and many new schools being constructed, he said, and a number of new beaches and pleasure resorts are being opened.

"There is remarkable development there," he reported.

Mr. O'Connor said he saw no evidence that Cubans are unfriendly toward Americans. But they do agree thoroughly with Castro, he said, when the Cuban leader accuses the United States of meddling in his country's affairs.

Mr. O'Connor, a biographer of American millionaires, is a former public relations director of the old Oil Workers International Union, CIO, and is chairman of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. Three years ago he was indicted by a Newark federal grand jury for failing to answer a subpoena issued by the House un-American activities committee. The charge of contempt of Congress still is pending.

As last Monday Cuban radio stations began urging Cubans to take to the streets in "our socialist revolution."

While the Cuban government continued to shout its victory and threaten its enemies, it still surrounded the headquarters of the top figures of the regime, including Castro.

They have not been seen in public nor heard over the radio or television since two days before the rebel landings, although war communiques were signed by him and official newsmen reported that he personally led his militia in combat.

There was no news either about Maj. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the minister of industries and Castro's closest associate. His name has not been mentioned even once in radio programs since the landings began.

Maj. Raul Castro, minister of revolutionary armed forces and Castro's younger brother, was reported twice to be in Oriente Province, but no mention of him has been made in the last three days.

Nothing has been said either about Maj. Juan Almeida, the Army commander, and Capt. Antonio Nunez Jimenez, the head of the agrarian reform program and one of Castro's closest co-workers.

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